

Message Text

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PAGE 01 DUBLIN 00031 061821Z

43

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FM AMEMBASSY DUBLIN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7504

INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMCONSUL BELFAST

C O N F I D E N T I A L DUBLIN 31

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT PFOR EI UK (NI)

SUBJ: NORTHERN IRELAND MASSACRES

1. EVEN THOUGH JADED BY REPEATED ATROCITY STORIES, THE GENERAL REACTION IN THE REPUBLIC TO THE MURDER OF 10 PROTESTANTS JAN. 5 HAS BEEN STRONG. THE FEELING IN DUBLIN IS THAT THIS IS ONE LONG STEP TOWARD ARMAGEDDON, AND THERE IS A GENERAL FEAR HERE THAT THE SITUATION CAN ACCELERATE GEOMETRICALLY.

2. THE IRISH CABINET IS MEETING TO DISCUSS THE SITUATION TODAY. AN EMBOFF TALKED TO COUNSELOR JOHN MCCOLGAN IN THE ANGLO-IRISH DIVISION OF THE MFA, WHO SAID THAT THE PROBABLE OUTCOME OF THE CABINET MEETING WOULD BE "URGENT CONSULTATIONS" WITH THE BRITISH. THE EMBOFF NOTICED THAT BRITISH HEAD OF CHANCERY DALY WAS ALREADY CONSULTING WITH MCCOLGAN'S COLLEAGUE.

3. MCCOLGAN SAID THE BRITISH WOULD BE TOLD PLAINLY THAT THIS MASSACRE AND THE OTHERS IN SOUTH ARMAGH MUST NOT BE IMPUTED TO A LACK OF IRISH SECURITY COOPERATION. THE IRISH ARE, IN FACT, DOING QUITE LITERALLY EVERYTHING POSSIBLE IN THE SECURITY SPHERE, HE SAID, AND EVEN THE LOYALISTS (MCCOLGAN IS THE GOI EXPERT ON LOYALIST OPINION) BELIEVE THAT THE PROVOS ARE SAFER IN THEIR OWN TURF IN ARMAGH THAN THEY ARE IN DUNDALK (ON THE REPUBLIC SIDE OF
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PAGE 02 DUBLIN 00031 061821Z

THE BORDER). MCCOLGAN THEN EXPOSTULATED AT SOME LENGTH, GIVING

THE FAMILIAR GOI VIEWPOINT ABOUT THE "BLUNDERS OF THE BRITISH," ESPECIALLY THEIR BIG MISTAKE IN TALKING TO THE PARAMILITARIES. HE SAID THAT THE ONLY POSSIBILITY FOR A POLITICAL SOLUTION NOW IS FOR THE BRITISH TO SAY BLUNTLY TO ALL POLITICIANS THAT THERE WILL BE DIRECT RULE FOR THE FORESEEABLE FUTURE UNLESS POLITICIANS GET TOGETHER AND ESTABLISH A GOVERNMENT SATISFACTORY TO BOTH SIDES. AFTER STATING THIS, MCCOLGAN SAID, THE BRITISH MUST STICK TO IT THROUGH EVERYTHING FOR AT LEAST A YEAR TO REGAIN CREDIBILITY. AT THE MOMENT, HE SAID, THE MAIN-LINE LOYALISTS FIRMLY BELIEVE THAT THE BRITISH ARE AT THE POINT OF CAVING IN AND RESTORING PROTESTANT RULE, WHILE ON THE OTHER SIDE THE PROVOS BELIEVE THAT IF THEY CAN KEEP UP THE PRESSURE A BIT LONGER THE BRITISH WILL GIVE IN TO THEM AND BEGIN A WITHDRAWAL.

4. WITH GRIM HUMOR MCCOLGAN SAID THAT THE EVENING OF JAN. 6 WOULD BE A BAD NIGHT FOR CATHOLICS. HE SAID THE GOI WAS TAKING EXTRA-ORDINARY SECURITY PRECAUTIONS AT AIRPORTS AND ALONG THE BORDER, WITH THE DEFINITE POSSIBILITY OF PROTESTANT PARAMILITARY REPRISALS IN THE REPUBLIC.

5. COMMENT: THE SECURITY SITUATION IS INDEED GLOOMY, AND THERE IS EVERY POSSIBILITY THAT IT COULD GET WORSE. HOWEVER, THERE IS ALSO GENERAL BELIEF HERE THAT THE BRITISH CAN KEEP THE LID ON, AT LEAST TO PREVENT CIVIL WAR. HOWEVER, NOBODY HERE CAN SAY WHAT CONSTITUTES "AN ACCEPTABLE LEVEL OF KILLING". CURLEY

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